

the Puritan champions by both reason and Scripture. He first fortifies his position by elucidating the operation of law in creation, in individuals, and in human societies. He thus at the outset emphasises the diversity of law. " As the actions of men are of sundry distinct kinds, so the laws thereof must accordingly be distinguished. There are in men operations, some natural, some rational, some supernatural, some politic, some finally ecclesiastical." All these have their proper laws, and his thesis is that, as man is a many-sided being, he is subject to a variety of laws, so that even in his religious life his action is to be regulated by these as well as by the injunctions of Scripture. " It is their (the Puritans) error to think that the only law which God hath appointed unto men in that behalf is the sacred Scripture.⁵¹ The law of reason, natural and positive laws, are equally applicable. From this general position he proceeds through a number of elaborately reasoned books to combat the Puritan contentions that Scripture is the only measure of conduct, that it must necessarily contain a form of Church government whose laws are unalterable, that the Anglican polity is corrupt and popish in the matter of orders, rites, and ceremonies, that these have been banished from all properly reformed Churches, whose example ought to be followed by the English Church. The fifth book is an elaborate defence of the Anglican worship, to which the Puritans take objection. The sixth maintains the Anglican practice against the Puritan view of Church discipline. The seventh and eighth respectively champion the episcopal jurisdiction against the presbyterian, and the ecclesiastical prerogative of the sovereign against both the papist and the presbyterian dogma of the independence of the Church.

The breadth of view, the reasonableness, the forceful diction of the " Ecclesiastical Polity " raise it to a high level as a controversial work. The note of reasonableness is especially commendable. I am not sure that, from the merely theological point of view, the Puritan had not the best of the argument, if regard be had to the fact that both sides accepted the Bible as an infallible and sufficient revelation. Such a revelation, the Puritan might forcibly contend, should give direction in so important a subject as Church government. Hooker, being as staunch a believer in the infallibility of the